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# FIRST STEPS IN ORGANIZING PLAYGROUNDS

LEE F. HANMER

Charities Publication Committee  
New York

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\$7.00 per hundred copies expressage collect.



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION PUBLICATION.

# FIRST STEPS IN ORGANIZING PLAYGROUNDS

By  
LEE F. HANMER

Field Secretary of the Playground Association of America

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Charities Publication Committee  
105 East 22d Street  
New York

MAY, 1908

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Gift  
Russell Sage Foundation  
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LC Control Number



tmp96 026368

## FIRST STEPS IN ORGANIZING PLAY- GROUNDS.

*Statement.*—The conditions under which playgrounds may be started vary so greatly in different cities, that it is useless to attempt to fix upon any one plan that can be said to be most desirable. Also it is a question whether any person or committee has gone far enough into this subject to be in a position to recommend any set plan as the one sure to bring the best results.

It seems therefore that the object of this article can best be gained by giving a brief statement of the different plans that have been tried, and by drawing such inferences as may be possible from available experience.

The purpose is to furnish helpful suggestions to committees and associations that are planning to begin or extend public playgrounds in their cities.

*Forms of Administration.*—The forms of administration that have met with some degree of success are:

### 1. Voluntary.

- a. A local society or club working through a committee.
- b. Several societies or clubs working through a joint committee.
- c. A playground association made up of interested persons, with committees for different departments of the work.

2. Board of Education.

- a. A committee appointed by the Board to conduct summer playgrounds.
- b. A department of playgrounds and recreation centers.
- c. A department of hygiene.

3. Municipal.

- a. A playground commission appointed by the mayor or city council.
- b. The park department working through its superintendent or a committee.
- c. The city council, by delegating the work to any city department, such as the Department of Health, or the Department of Public Works.

4. Combinations.

- a. A playground commission appointed by the mayor, supported by both city appropriations and private contributions.
- b. A local playground association supported by both private contributions and city appropriations.
- c. A local society or club with the assistance and co-operation of the Board of Education or the City Council.

The above plans have been put into operation in different cities by the methods that are here given somewhat in detail.

I-a. A LOCAL SOCIETY OR CLUB WORKING THROUGH A COMMITTEE. (See Troy, N. Y., 1907.)

The movement is usually started by some member

of the society bringing up the matter and getting a committee appointed to see what can be done.

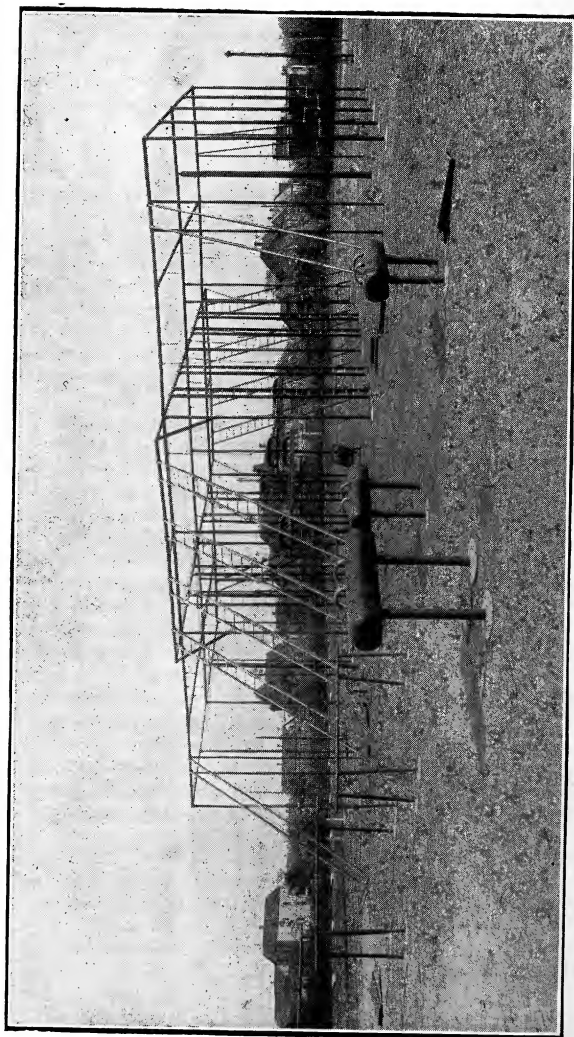
The committee will do well at the outset to enlist the interest of the local press, and to see that articles are published on the benefits and needs of playgrounds, what other cities are doing, and what this city might do. The committee should then secure all available information on the sites, equipment, supervision, and plans of operation. The National Association is in a position to give assistance in this.

After the plans have been pretty definitely worked out, a statement of what is proposed is usually made public and suggestions invited. A free lecture on playgrounds, illustrated by lantern slides, always helps to enlist public interest. An experienced supervisor should be engaged some weeks in advance, if possible, in order that the committee may have the benefit of his assistance in formulating plans. This is often done by correspondence but the supervisor should be on the ground a few days prior to the opening.

It is well to make a modest beginning and to be sure that the first undertaking will be successful, but it has been found an aid to success to start with at least two playgrounds in order that there may be a little rivalry in attendance, appearance, and things accomplished. The success or failure of a playground depends very largely upon the supervisor and the teachers. The personality of those in charge is of the first importance for the playground stands primarily for character building.

I-b. SEVERAL SOCIETIES OR CLUBS WORKING THROUGH A JOINT COMMITTEE. (See Cleveland, O., 1907.)

It is fortunate when two or more clubs or socie-



AN UP-TO-DATE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.



ties are willing to unite their efforts for playgrounds by working through a joint committee.

Small committees have succeeded best, but it is important that each society be represented.

The method of procedure is usually similar to that in 1-a, the only difference being that the committee's powers need to be agreed upon very definitely and in detail. The amount of money that each society is willing to invest in the undertaking must be stated in advance.

Clubs can give no better evidence of their interest in the welfare of their community than by uniting in an undertaking of this kind.

I-c. A PLAYGROUND ASSOCIATION MADE UP OF INTERESTED PERSONS, WITH COMMITTEES FOR DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF THE WORK. (See Rochester, N. Y., 1907.)

This is the plan that has been most uniformly successful. It stands on its own feet and is not responsible to any other body. It is in a position to enlist public interest and support as a private club could not do.

An association of this sort is usually formed at a public meeting called by a few individuals who are specially interested in the matter. It has been found useful to precede such a meeting with a number of newspaper articles dealing with the advantages of playgrounds and the local need; it has not worked well, however, to make any detailed statement in advance of what is proposed to be done. This is likely to invite objection before the plans are clearly understood, and also, people like to have a hand in planning a project to which they are to give assistance.

After the organization is formed and officers have been elected, it is the usual plan to appoint committees to look after the various departments of the work such as finance, membership, grounds and equipment, supervision, and publicity. There should be a carefully selected executive committee with full power to deal with all matters in the intervals between meetings of the association.

A carefully prepared annual report giving a summary of work accomplished, funds used, and plans for the next season, have been found to be very useful in retaining and extending public interest.

After the utility of playgrounds has been demonstrated it is usually possible to get the city to assume the expense of maintenance and supervision. This does not mean that the work of the association is finished, it is rather the ideal condition for its work. A playground association can be of great usefulness to a community by co-operating with the city in the selection of sites, training of teachers, and general extension of the work.

2-a. A COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT SUMMER PLAYGROUNDS. (See Providence, R. I., 1907.)

The natural location of playgrounds is in connection with the school buildings, and it is logical for the Board of Education to equip, maintain, and supervise them.

School boards seldom take the initiative in such matters but frequently they have responded to a popular request that summer playgrounds be maintained.

The first stage is usually to appoint a committee

on summer playgrounds and give it certain authority in the expenditure of funds for equipment, maintenance, and supervision.

It is sometimes necessary to secure in addition to the school yards, vacant lots, athletic field, park spaces, etc.

The work of getting the playgrounds under way is similar to that of the committee described in 1-a, except that it is not necessary to give so much attention to publicity and it is not necessary to hold public meetings. An announcement through the schools is sufficient.

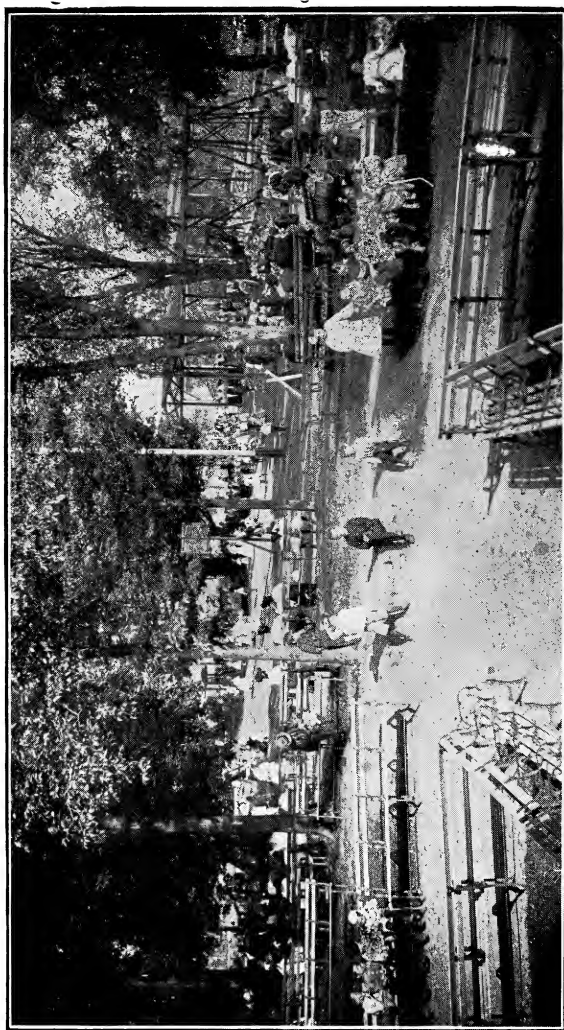
The problem of administration is simplified by the possibility of using the conveniences of the school buildings in connection with the playground, and, in case industrial classes are also to be conducted, the schoolrooms are available for such purpose.

The plan has the advantage of being a part of the public school system, and consequently it is not looked upon by the people as a charity.

## 2-b. A DEPARTMENT OF PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS. (See New York City, 1907.)

This is likely to be a development of 2-a, but is sometimes a result of the work done under the 1-a plan.

It has the dignity of being a regular department of the schools, and as such is in a position to develop the work in a permanent way. It is also possible through such a department, to get certain regulations adopted by the school board providing for play space in connection with all new school buildings, securing roof playgrounds, etc.



PARK PLAYGROUND IN TROY, N. Y.

2-c. A DEPARTMENT OF HYGIENE. (See Boston, Mass., 1908, making a start in this direction.)

The ideal arrangement is a department of hygiene that shall include school gymnastics, summer playgrounds, recreation and social centers, athletics, games and folk dancing, medical inspection, heating, lighting, and ventilation, adjustment of school furniture, and the regulation of text book printing in respect to size of letters, length of line, spacing, etc.

There are forces at work in this direction, and certain phases of this plan are being tried.

With the work being done by separate departments there is sure to be duplication and omission, instead of it being correlated and systematized in a way that would make it economical and efficient.

3-a. A PLAYGROUND COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR OR THE CITY COUNCIL. (See Newark, N. J., 1907.)

The state of New Jersey has a law under which the mayors of the different cities are authorized to appoint playground commissions that shall have power to purchase, equip and maintain public playgrounds. These commissions are limited in their work because they can do no more than the appropriation of funds will permit.

There is no reason why this plan should not be followed in states where such a law does not exist, provided that those interested can induce the local administration to authorize the appointment of such a commission.

The course usually followed is for the commission to secure the services of an experienced super-

visor to aid them in selecting sites and mapping out a plan with estimates of expense for carrying on the work for a stated number of weeks during the summer.

Often the school board will co-operate by granting the use of the school buildings and grounds, as will the park department in the use of park spaces.

3-b. THE PARK DEPARTMENT WORKING THROUGH ITS SUPERINTENDENT OR A COMMITTEE. (See Minneapolis, Minn., 1907. )

Many cities have been provided with an excellent system of playgrounds through the active interest of the park department.

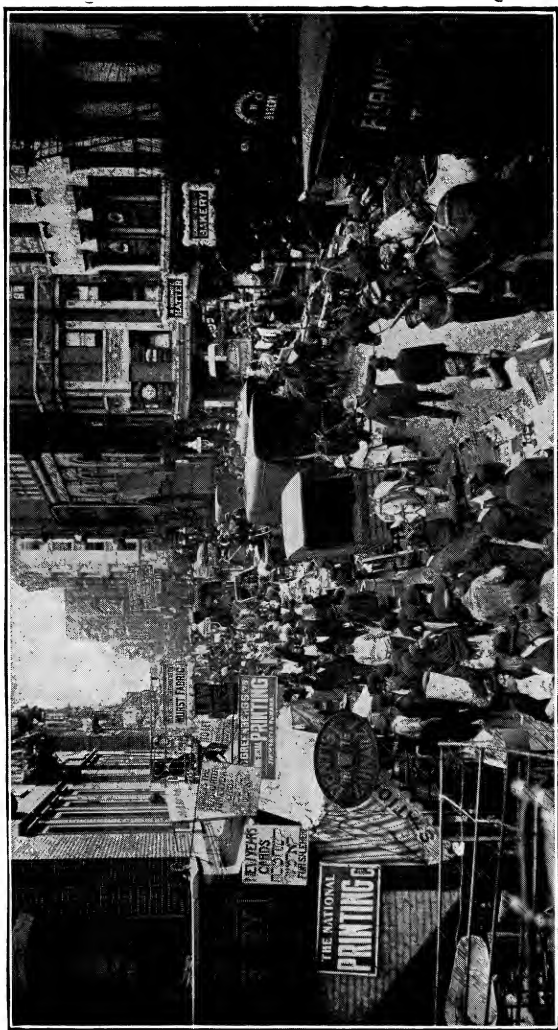
There is danger under this plan of stopping with the grading and equipping of grounds without making any provision for supervisors and teachers. Such playgrounds not only fall short of their possibilities for usefulness, but frequently become public nuisances.

There is no reason why a park department should not furnish both supervisors and grounds, in fact some of the most successful playground systems of the country are administered in this way.

If funds are limited it is best to equip only such grounds as it is possible to provide supervisors for.

3-c. THE CITY COUNCIL, BY DELEGATING THE WORK TO ANY CITY DEPARTMENT, SUCH AS THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, OR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS. (See Buffalo, N. Y., 1907.)

This is the least desirable way of conducting municipal playgrounds, but it is often the intermediate step in transferring work started by voluntary organizations to city control.



A TYPICAL EAST SIDE STREET IN NEW YORK CITY.

The best results under this plan have been secured by delegating the management of the playgrounds to a competent director who shall be responsible to the department by which the playgrounds are maintained. Some very creditable work is being done in this way.

4-a. A PLAYGROUND COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR, SUPPORTED BY BOTH CITY APPROPRIATIONS AND PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS. (See Trenton, N. J., 1908.)

The combination plans are all temporary arrangements, made use of to tide over some special situation; or they may be the transition stage, from one form of administration to another.

The 4-a plan happens when a city is unable to supply the necessary funds to carry on the work laid out by the commission. It has its good features in that the public, being called upon for assistance, feels more of a personal ownership and interest in the undertaking through personal contribution for its support. A common means of raising the necessary funds is by getting schools or Y. M. C. A.'s to give benefit exhibitions, announcing the exact purpose for which the funds so raised are to be expended.

4-b. A LOCAL PLAYGROUND ASSOCIATION SUPPORTED BY BOTH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS AND CITY APPROPRIATIONS. (See Pittsburg, Pa., 1907.)

Municipal support usually comes as a result of volunteer playground work successfully conducted. It is sometimes arranged so that the administration machinery set up by the playground association shall



continue to handle the work, the city appropriating a fixed sum annually for its support. Sometimes the school board will also make an appropriation to be used in the same way.

4-c. A LOCAL SOCIETY OR CLUB WITH THE ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OR THE CITY COUNCIL. (See Montclair, N. J., 1907.)

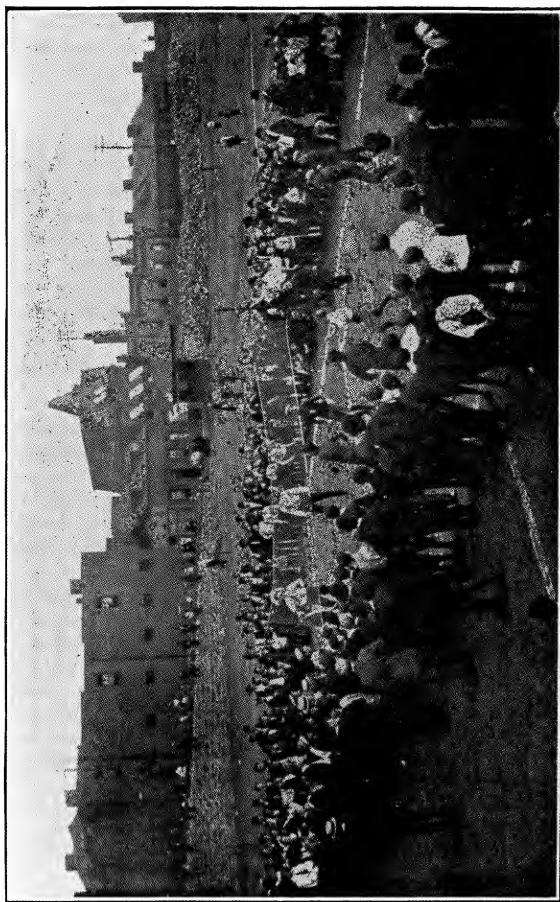
This plan is similar to that under 4-b, except that the assistance from the city or the school board, instead of being in the form of cash, comes through the use of the city property such as sections of park land, school yards, and school buildings. These grounds are sometimes equipped by the city also; the society or club providing for the supervision only.

*General.*—No matter how the beginning is made, there are certain considerations that apply to all and must be dealt with at the outset.

1. *Sites.*—Naturally the first playground will be located where there is the greatest need. This is usually in congested or troublesome sections. They should not be limited to such sections, however, for they are needed by all classes of children.

It is well at the outset to lay out a definite and comprehensive plan for the whole city and work toward that ideal.

The necessary space should be secured before land values have increased to a prohibitive price and the desirable locations have been developed for other purposes. An early and exhaustive study of sites is well worth while; with attention given to possibilities offered by filling in low places, se-



PUBLIC PLAYGROUND IN PITTSBURG, PA.

curing abandoned cemeteries, etc. Plans should also be made for large spaces for athletic fields, baseball grounds and golf courses. This is what has been termed "heading off the slums."

The playground plan for Washington drawn up by the Organization Committee of the Playground Association of America in 1906 is given below as a suggestion.

1. "It seems to us obvious that the Playground system of every city should represent a plan which would provide a playground within reasonable walking distance of every child. Our reasons for this are that play under proper conditions is essential to the health, as well as the physical, social, and moral well-being of the child. Hence, they are a necessity for all children—as much as schools. If they are a necessity, they must be so located that all the children can reach them.

2. It has seemed to us also that the beautiful triangles and circles and ornamental parks, which obtain so plentifully in Washington are almost negligible so far as their utility as playgrounds is concerned. None but the very small children can use them for play. Organized games can be played in none of them.

3. For school playgrounds the most careful canvass which we have been able to make of the needs of the children makes it evident that the present London requirement is the minimum amount that should be allowed. This is thirty square feet of playground for each child in the school.

4. Inasmuch as public education is now recognized as a proper function for public support, and

playgrounds are a necessity for the well being of children, we believe that they should be on land owned by the city, and also that they should be operated at the expense of the city. We believe that it is necessary that there should be at least one public playground in each of the school districts of Washington. This would provide for not less than two acres of playground for each 4,000 children.

5. The most extended experiments which have been carried on in recent years indicate that the largest usefulness of those fields can not be reached without the existence of playground buildings. Notably in Chicago and Boston this has been demonstrated. In view, however, of the necessity of the adaptation of these buildings to particular local conditions, it would probably be wise to erect one such building and test it in all details before recommending the general plan to the city.

6. The playgrounds do not meet the needs of the older boys. It has been found practically impossible to care for the older boys on the same grounds on which the little ones are cared for. Hence, it seems to us that it is essential to have athletic fields. In our judgment, one for each of the four sections of the city would probably be adequate. The present park system of Washington is entirely unprovided with athletic fields. The hours of labor in Washington are shorter than in other cities. Hence, we are inclined to believe that there is peculiar need for these athletic fields.

The playground building which is proposed for Washington, to be operated in connection with the Playgrounds, is to contain, on the first floor, a play-

room for the small children, toilets and shower and tub baths. The second floor to contain a branch of the public library, a small reading room, an auditorium which could be used for any sort of neighborhood meeting or for social purposes, and three or four club rooms. The top floor is to be devoted entirely to a gymnasium.

In the opinion of the Playground Committee of Washington, to group thus in one building a public bath, a public comfort station, a library, an auditorium, a play room and a gymnasium, has these advantages:

1st. It secures a great saving in the cost of sites and buildings over the erection of these features separately.

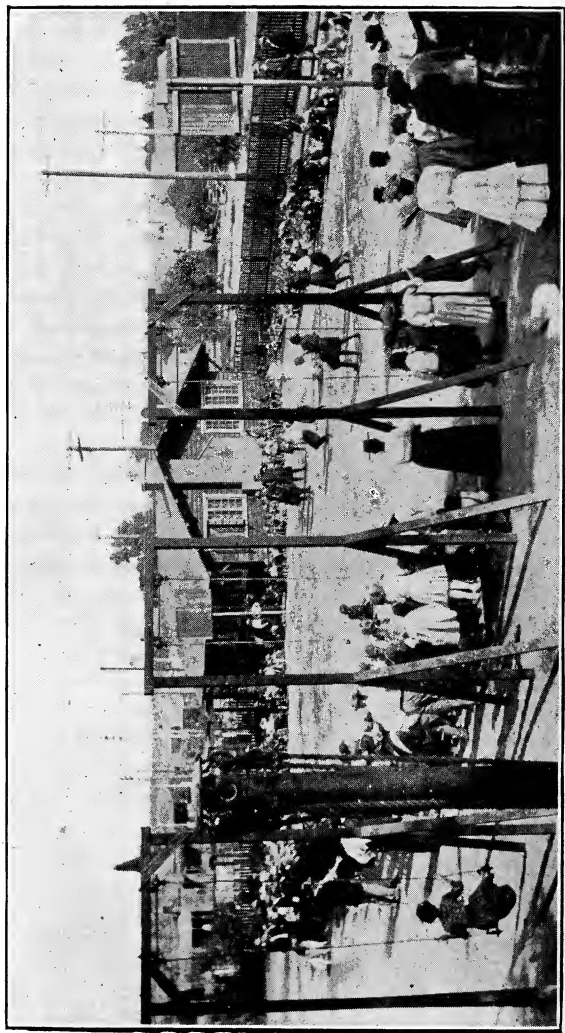
2nd. The operating expenses are much less.

3rd. Each feature of the building contributes to the popularity of the others, as shown by the experience of Boston and Chicago where they are used to the fullest extent.

4th. It is more convenient for the people to have these utilities together than to have to pass from building to building to make use of more than one of them.

5th. By bringing the people of any community together thus in a common center, not only are they kept away from the saloon and evil influences, but a strong incentive is given to the forming of neighborly and community feeling."

2. *Equipment*.—If funds are specially limited it is quite possible to make a beginning with home-made apparatus and even a small amount of that;



ONE OF THE LOS ANGELES PLAYGROUNDS.

but apparatus of this sort is neither so durable nor attractive as that furnished by the machine companies. If it is possible at the beginning to equip the playground in a permanent way, it is well worth while to get first class apparatus. It is possible, however, to start a playground with a sand pile.

The following is a statement of a set of home-made apparatus that has been used with such a degree of success that the city is likely to take over the work:

- 1 Shute the shutes
  - 4 Box swings for small children under shelter
  - 4 Sand bins for small children under shelter
  - 4 Large swings
  - 1 Horizontal bar
  - 3 Teters
  - 1 Jump pit
  - 1 Basket ball ground and equipment
  - 2 Quoit grounds
- Besides bean bags, skipping ropes, etc.

The expense of equipment was:

Brackets for lamps, wires, etc.	\$27.55
Hauling . . . . .	3.88
Keys for strong box . . .	.30
Carpenter and laborer . . .	70.30
Lumber . . . . .	96.77
Incidentals . . . . .	1.86
Rope, pails, dippers, etc. . .	12.57

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Total . . . . . \$213.66

3. *Plan of Operation.*—The first consideration is the length of time that the work shall be conducted and the hours during which the grounds shall be open.

The period is usually from six to eight weeks, and the hours from 1.30 to 5.30 P. M. When occupation classes are also conducted they are generally held in the forenoon from 9 to 12.

Some playgrounds have two sessions per day each made up of occupation and play periods.

The most successful teachers plan each day's program carefully in advance, but do not of necessity hold rigidly to it. Much must be left to development upon the playground, but a prepared program serves as a reserve supply.

The boys can be kept busy with the apparatus, the games, and athletics; the girls will be interested in games, folk dances, singing, etc.; the smaller children both boys and girls, find constant amusement with the swings, see-saws, gymnastic games, singing games, and story telling; and the little tots can be kept busy with the sand pile, baby swings, and kindergarten stories.

The following list of games is made up from printed schedules of successful playgrounds:



## PLAYGROUND AND VACATION SCHOOL GAMES.

### Circle Games.

Skipaway.  
Fox and Farmer.  
Bull in the Ring, or  
Bear in the Ring.

Numbers Change.  
Three Deep, or  
Third Man.

Squat Tag in a Circle.  
Cat and Mouse.

### Bean Bag Games.

Bean Bag Race.  
Bean Bag Board.

Bean Bags in a Circle. Duck on a Rock.  
Bag Passing Back- Bag Passing Side-  
ward. ward.

### Ball Games.

Center Base,  
Hand Ball,  
Pass Ball,  
Touch Ball.  
Beetle Chase and  
Wander Ball.

Catch Ball.  
Arch Ball.  
Medicine Ball.  
Wander Ball.  
Dodge Ball.

Circle Catch Ball.  
Teacher.  
Days of the Week.  
Red Fox and  
White Rabbit.

### School Room Games.

Memory Exercise –  
“Rainbow.”  
Where is it?  
Run About Race.

Racket Catching  
Play.  
Jolly Workmen.

Crossing the Line.  
I Saw.

### Singing Games.

The Muffin Man.  
London Bridge.  
Birds.  
A Hunting We Will  
Go.  
Round and Round  
the Village.

Can You Guess What  
We Are Doing?  
Little Hare.  
I'm on the King's  
Land.  
Where's Your Shep-  
herd?

Gathering Nuts in  
May.  
Fox and Chickens.  
How-do-you-do?  
Zum-Zum in the  
Garden.

### Miscellaneous Games.

Chinese Chicken.  
Steeple Chase.  
Relay Race—Single.  
Red Rover, or  
Red Lion.  
Prisoner's Base.  
Chickens.  
How? When? Where?

Last Pair Pass.  
Dare Base  
Straddle Club.  
Peel Away  
Still Pond, No more  
Moving.  
Serpentine Race.

The Farmer and the  
Crow.  
Poison.  
Relay Bean Bag Race.  
Have You Seen My  
Sheep?  
Hop Scotch.  
Birds Fly.

### Gymnastic Motion Songs.

The Old Owl.

The Froggies Swim-  
ming School  
Our Little Canoes.

The Blacksmith.

### Gymnastic Dancing.

Dancing Topsy.  
Jig Steps  
Virginia Reel.

Brownie Polka.  
Swedish Folk Dances.  
Bohemian Folk Dance.

Balance Steps.  
Dan Tucker.

4. *Supervision.*—It is worse than useless to attempt to conduct playgrounds without supervisors.

Important as play may be from the standpoint of health and recreation, it is far more important in its social aspects. It is the school for citizenship, the laboratory where habits are developed that are all important. Play in itself is socially neither good nor bad, but the mutual relationships involved have an ethical effect that may be toward good or toward evil; therefore, we must have play under right conditions, and the city street is not likely to furnish such conditions, nor is the freedom of the country sure to do so. The properly supervised playground is the solution of the problem. Not supervision that restricts and robs play of its spontaneity, but such supervision as will not tolerate the evils, and so regulates and controls that there shall be the greatest possible freedom.

There is a wholesome kind of freedom upon the playground because the child must play by the rules or be shut out by his playmates or those in charge; therefore if he stays controlling his temper and playing according to a fair ideal he is getting the right sort of training for citizenship in a free country.

Children may learn much from precept, but habits of honesty, loyalty, and fair play that become a real part of the character can be secured only through practice, and a well supervised playground is a safe place in which to practice.

The paper presented at the Chicago Convention in the spring of 1906 by Mrs. Samuel Ammon, treasurer of the Pittsburg Playground Association, contains so much that is helpful along this line that certain parts of it are here given:

"The estimated cost of one playground including

the salary of two kindergartners, janitor, equipment and supplies for five weeks, is one hundred and fifty dollars. The committee or organization or individual members of either ought to furnish that amount for the first playground season. Then, not at the close of your first playground season, but early the following spring, prepare a statement in the form of a letter—not a report—of what you planned for your one playground and what you succeeded in doing. Describe it as you would in a letter to a friend. Briefly, give the estimated and actual expenditure, number of children present each day, and the effect upon them.

“One method of informing yourselves in order that you may be able to give very necessary information to others, is that your executive or park committee shall visit every densely built or slum district in your city or town. Make a note of the vacant pieces of property, their situation, size and proximity to dwelling houses. Let each member of your committee make a note of the data thus secured and make inquiries regarding the ownership or the agency representing the properties noted in your tour. Ascertain if there is any prospect of such properties being sold or improved with buildings. If not, ask if you can use the property for a playground. Lease it, borrow it, buy it, but get it.

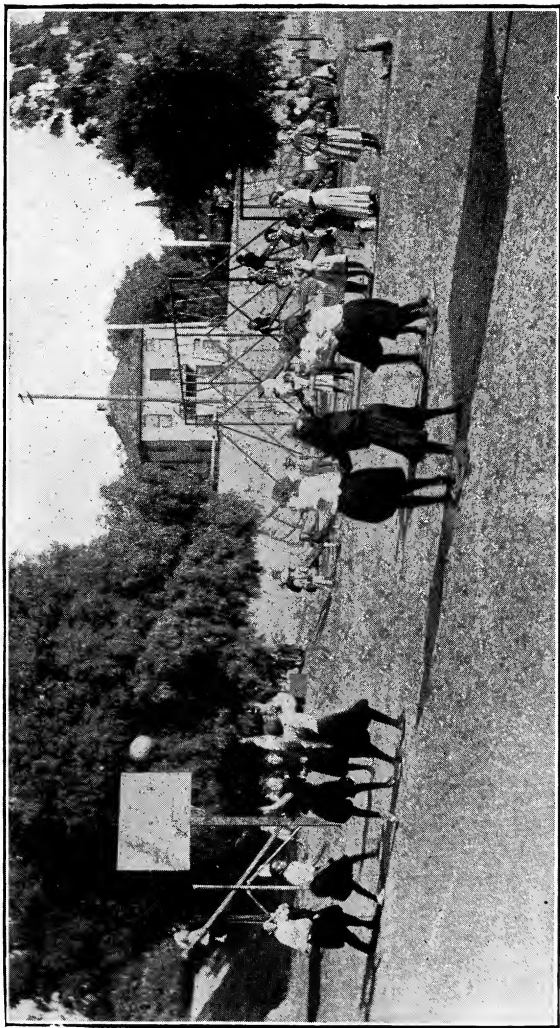
“Then find out the location of all vacant pieces of property belonging in fee to your city or town. If you have no funds, or if your city has not the authority to equip recreation grounds, obtain permission to have some kind of a playground there if only a sand garden, or with temporary buildings. You will be able to prove the value of a playground to the neighborhood, and something permanent will be the result. Do not be afraid of getting into

politics. You will be in the midst of politics, but no man will say to you (a second time): 'Your party helped you to give the children playgrounds, we will not do so.'

"Do not attempt pictures or formal reports the first year, tell your friends or organizations that there are many more children and many more districts, for there always are such in need of playgrounds; tell them that fifty cents is the average cost per child. In after years the cost will be more—but not until you have vacation schools. One strong committee or club can take care of several playgrounds, but the interest will be increased more rapidly if after your first year's experience you call together the heads of the leading organizations and form a joint or representative committee.

"While you are experimenting with a school yard playground or a piece of land loaned to you, which has a house for shelter already upon it or upon which you have erected a tent or shed, you must have ascertained under what authority school boards or boards of control can give the use of school rooms or yards to individuals or associations during the summer months, and also whether they can make appropriations for the maintenance of such playgrounds. Also if you are so ambitious so early in your playground career as to plan for recreation parks, ascertain if there is a law permitting appropriations for that purpose, and for securing or acquiring land for recreation purposes. You may find as we did in Pittsburg that some one had felt and thought for the children and that such a law exists.

"In Pennsylvania the act of 1895 is clear and specific, and under this law the Central Board of Edu-



THE GIRLS' CORNER ON A LOS ANGELES PLAYGROUND.

cation of Pittsburg, a city of the second class, which is composed of representatives of the several school districts, makes an annual appropriation for the maintenance and equipment of playgrounds in school yards.

"The money thus appropriated is paid to the treasurer of the Playground Association by a warrant on the city treasurer.

"The act provides 'for the opening, improvement, enlargement, use, care and protection of school and other grounds for public park and recreation purposes in the cities and boroughs of the commonwealth, by the joint and several action of school boards, city and borough authorities, corporations, societies, associations or individuals.' It permits the use of school grounds for park and recreation purposes by the public.

"It authorizes school boards to provide for the enlargement, improvement, care and protection of the school grounds when used for park and recreation purposes by the public. They are also empowered to make arrangements with corporations, societies, associations or individuals for the lease, use or donation of property for public park or recreation purposes.

"School systems vary so greatly in different states, even within the same state, that to advise any special form or suggest a draft of a law enabling school or city authorities to make these appropriations would not be of practical value. In Pennsylvania, for instance, local school boards in cities of the second class decide upon the amount of money they will need for the ensuing year. This millage is then reported to the Central Board of Education, and by it when approved sent to the city councils, and there it passes both branches of councils with the appro-

priation budgets from the several city departments. However, the amount cannot be added to or reduced by councils; in that matter the Central Board of Education is supreme.

"About mid-winter an estimate is made by the executive board of the Playground Association as to the amount necessary for salaries, necessary improvements and equipment for all of the recreation grounds in use during the preceding year, and for any additional grounds for the next year. This schedule is sent with the estimates from the city departments to the mayor, and if approved by him is referred to councils, then to the finance committee, and with or without change according to their action, is returned to councils, for final action. The mayor has the power to add to or to reduce the estimates presented to him so as to bring the total sum within the estimated revenues from taxation. Accounts payable from the appropriation made for recreation grounds, are paid by the city treasurer when countersigned by the treasurer of the Playground Association and approved by the city comptroller.

"In New Jersey the laws relating to the acquisition and maintenance of recreation parks for cities and towns are very similar, but place them under the care of park commissioners, without reference to school authorities.

"We do not think that the present law of the state of Ohio, touching the subject of recreation grounds and playgrounds and which is a part of the law defining the 'powers of municipalities' is adequate. The first division under 'special powers' refers to the appropriation of property and includes the power to appropriate property for parks, park entrances, boulevards, market-places and children's play-

grounds. The state regent of Ohio, Mrs. Edward Orton, has arranged to have a bill drafted pertaining to this subject for presentation to the Ohio legislature.

"In the laws of Maryland we have only knowledge of the special act of 1906 relating to the city of Baltimore, which provides that the mayor and city council of Baltimore are authorized to enter an agreement with the duly constituted officers of the Children's Playground Association for the maintenance of children's playgrounds in the city of Baltimore, for such length of time and upon such terms as the mayor and city council of Baltimore may deem advantageous.

"Special legislation is not permitted under the constitution of all states, but where it is this seems to be a model it would be well to copy.

"In Massachusetts the Act of 1893, relating to public playgrounds was found to be inadequate and an act was prepared 'to enlarge the powers of the school committee of the city of Boston in respect to physical education.' This act was signed by the governor April 13, of the present year 1907.

"The act recently passed will be of inestimable value where there is no general state law governing the subject or no association formed for the purpose of conducting playgrounds and vacation schools.

"The act enlarges the powers of the school committee of the city of Boston in respect to physical education.

"Within the limit of the appropriations for such purposes it may during the summer vacation and such other portion of the year as it may deem advisable, supervise, conduct, organize, and control physical training and exercise athletics, sports,

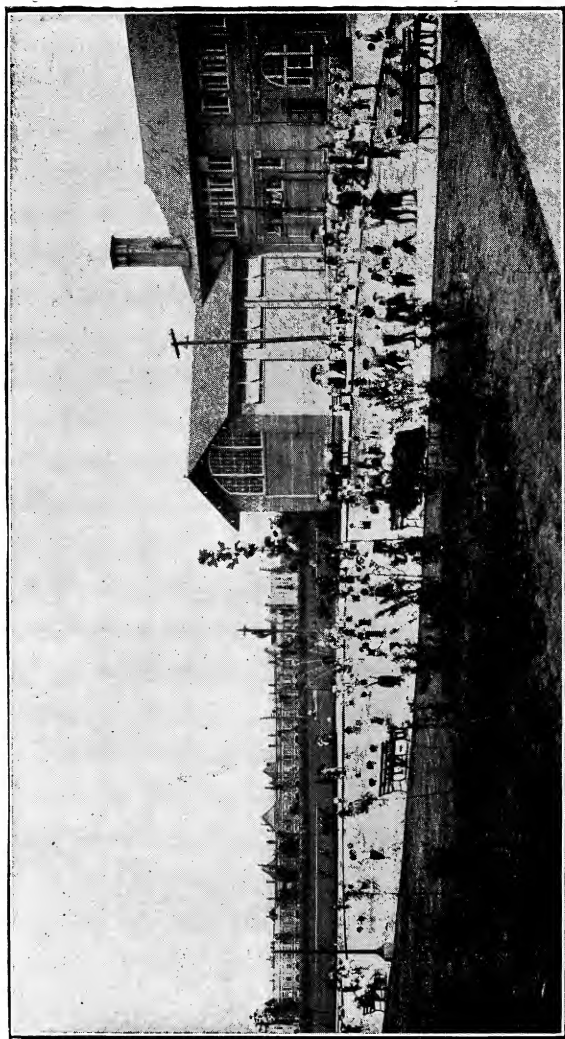


games and play, and provide proper apparatus, equipment and facilities for the same, in and upon the buildings, yards and playgrounds under the control of said committee, or upon any other land which it may have the right to use for any such purpose. It may use for these purposes such of the playgrounds, gymnasias or buildings under the control of the park commission of said city as said school committee may deem suitable therefor, and may equip the same therefor, such use to be subject, however, to such reasonable regulations and conditions as said park commission may prescribe.

“Appropriations for these purposes are made in the same manner as for the support of the public schools and the total amount of the appropriations is increased for the current financial year by two cents upon each one thousand dollars of the valuation on which the appropriations of the city council are based, and by two cents additional, or four cents in all, for each subsequent year.

“If in a town in the metropolitan parks district, or in any city, tenement buildings are built about or contiguous to open spaces, the owners of such buildings may apply to the park commissioners and they may, with the approval of the board of health of the city or town, take a lease of such open spaces for a neighborhood playground for a term not exceeding fifteen years, subject to renewal, at a rental not exceeding the taxes thereon. The owners of such buildings shall have the care and control thereof under the supervision of the board of park commissioners, or if there is none, of the selectmen.

“In New York by the act of 1888, any fifteen or more persons of full age, who shall desire to associate themselves together for the purpose of providing parks and playgrounds for children in any of



ONE OF THE CHICAGO FIELD HOUSES AND WADING POOLS.

the cities, towns or villages of the state, may become incorporated by filing a certificate of intention endorsed by one of the justices of the Supreme Court.

"Over and above any amount appropriated by school boards or city councils additional funds will be required. With your temporary playground committee formed or your association organized and perhaps incorporated, you will send out letters asking well known people who contribute to all worthy, and probably many unworthy objects. When you do this, send the same appeal to a large number—from three to five hundred—of less well known persons.

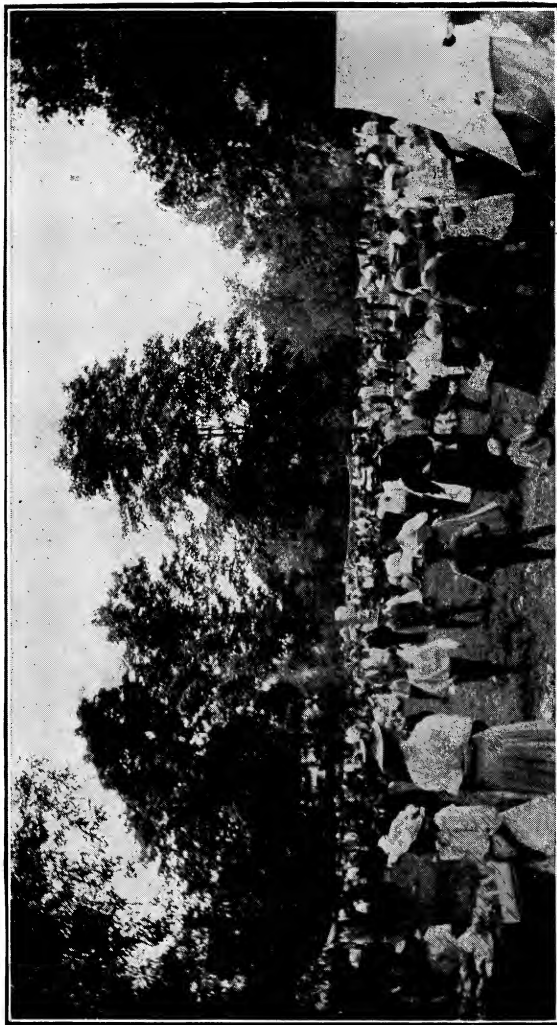
"State clearly what one dollar will do for a child of the alley or court; tell them that there are children who are not of that class, and yet whose lives are spent in the closely built up districts of the city. Tell them that small brick-paved or sun-baked squares in the midst of the grime and smoke of the city are not much to offer to the children, but that they come from court, from alley and cellar and from workshop, and in these playgrounds learn to cook, to sew, to saw, to plane, to play. Tell them how the children await you at the gates each morning and how they love the story hour, the tiny bunch of flowers placed in each grimy hand on flower day, how they learn to 'salute the flag,' and to come with clean hands so that they may carry it unsullied.

"You will receive many dollars and many five dollar contributions, and those will go very far towards the amount you must secure from private sources. No matter how much money you receive from appropriations, always pay the expenses of administration from your private funds. In the beginning do not say much about the educational side of the playground question. It is, we know, the impor-

tant side, but it is not that which will appeal to your prospective contributors and supporters.

"People in general are not interested in modern theories of education as applied to the child outside of the public and parochial schools. Keep the interest through the child, the child you are trying to make happier and better. Tell them you want to take each child to the country for one day, to let him see the green fields and trees and flowers. We advise excursions for one summer. The first summer there is nothing that appeals so strongly to the woman taking her own bairns to the country or seaside or to the man in his office as the thought of the countless thousands shut in between grimy walls and smoke stacks. The playground excursion to out of town parks or private places is perhaps the best method of placing your playground before the public. It is a good news item and makes interesting pictures.

"Appeal to the sentiment in every heart. Have your flower day and library day. Have the Daughters of the American Revolution give you your playground flags, and have them teach the children the flag salute. Realize in the beginning that the majority of people have so many cares and interests that they do not know or have forgotten the world of children in which you are interested, but tell them about them. As the interest increases, tell your contributors how necessary it is to give the older children occupation, tell them of your sewing classes on cellar doors, of the story hour beneath the shadow of the wall. In another year add your manual training and physical training departments, for your contributors will have increased and the constituents will have told their representatives in school board and council that they want the play-



THE PLAY PICNIC IN ULSTER COUNTY.

grounds. Do not as an association give entertainments to augment your funds. If other organizations wish to make money and give it as a contribution, permit them to do so, but you are to receive and administer the funds appropriated or given to you.

"One of the most important things for you to do is to secure the interest of your councilmen and city officials. Do not deluge them with reports, which they will not read, statistics which are only figures, but ask the man who represents the ward in which you have or wish to have a playground or recreation park, to go with you to see the ground and the children—the children he may have known only as noisy nuisances.

"When you have your first work established, your playgrounds open for at least a five or six weeks' term each summer and a law enacted making appropriations possible, invite your councilmen, school directors and city officials to meet with the members of your association. Formal invitations will not bring the men you want, ask them personally, and as a personal favor. Have at least one speaker of note present to make an address on a subject pertaining to your work. Then let your own officers tell briefly what you have done, why such work is needed and what is hoped for. The seed sown at such a meeting will result in a good harvest.

"It was Phillips Brooks who said: 'He who helps a child helps humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again.'"



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